

## ALL GAVE SOME; SOME GAVE ALL

This week's veterans are Bob and JA LaCharite

Bob graduated from Assumption High in 1964. He entered the University of Illinois and participated in Army Reserve Officer Training (ROTC). Upon graduation in January 1969, he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant and attended Air Defense Artillery training at Ft Bliss TX. An assignment to serve with the 45th Artillery Brigade in Arlington Heights IL beginning in July 1969 followed.

The 45<sup>th</sup> Artillery Brigade was the Headquarters command post for the 21 Nike Hercules missile sites surrounding the Chicago-Gary IN metropolitan area. Other major cities were similarly surrounded. These command posts were designed to provide the innermost protection for their metropolitan areas as part of the national air defense system during the Cold War with the Soviet Union and its allies between 1955 and 1975. Sophisticated manned radar was also located at each command post in order to scan the skies for any evidence of incoming bomber planes or missiles. Bob's assignment was to serve as part of the S-3 staff responsible for integrating and synchronizing the mission of the brigade as a whole for the Brigade commander. He also served as the motor pool officer.

After leaving military active duty and being employed in the Chicago area for two years Bob entered Eastern Illinois University graduate school for a Master in Business Administration. After completing the degree in 1975 he became a bank examiner for the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) serving in the Chicago suburbs, and then in Fort Wayne IN for several years. He married Mary Sortal in 1978 and a son David was born in 1981. After leaving the FDIC he worked for banks in Champaign and Princeton, IL, then returned to Fort Wayne to work in real estate sales and appraisal. They then returned to Massachusetts where Bob was employed by the Internal Revenue Service. He and Mary divorced in 1996 but continue to remain friends. In 2006 he transferred to the Champaign IL local IRS office to serve as a taxpayer customer service officer. During this time he was able to visit his parents George and Vivian in Assumption often before they both passed away.

He retired from the IRS in July 2012, lives in Champaign and is active in volunteering with Carle Hospital and as a tax preparer for senior and lower income people during the tax season. He also takes non-credit courses through the U of I. He has been able to travel since retirement with trips on Amtrak to the western US and to Japan. Bob is proud to have been able to serve his country both in the military and as a civilian employee.

Thank you, 1st Lieutenant Robert D. LaCharite, for what you gave for us.

J. A. LaCharite

The draft board was significant to most young men in 1968. As a 20-year-old student at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, I was called before the draft board to discuss my student deferment and I realized I had to start thinking about the military. I met a Marine recruiter on campus and signed up to attend the Marine Platoon Leaders Class at Quantico, Virginia in the summer of 1969. The 10-week Platoon Leaders Class was grueling. I graduated from Southern in June, 1970, with a degree in Economics. I received my commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corps from my brother Bob, an Army First Lieutenant, on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1970.

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In September of 1970 I reported to Quantico to attend the six-month Basic School (TBS) Upon completing TBS in early 1971, I became a Logistics Officer and was sent to train at Camp Lejeune, NC.

In the summer of 1971 I was assigned to the Third Force Service Regiment in Okinawa where I was involved in inventorying and maintaining equipment and gear returned from Viet Nam. In early 1972 I was assigned to the USS St. Louis off the coast of Viet Nam. Our ship served in a support capacity for operations in the war zone. The ship pulled into Subic Bay in the Philippines (a working port) twice during my deployment and to Hong Kong for liberty. I returned to the U.S. in late summer of 1972 and was assigned to the Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, CA. I was in charge of clothing issue for new recruits. After three years in the Marine Corps, my commitment was over in August, 1973. I returned to central Illinois and entered the MBA program at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston. In the spring of 1974, I was offered a job with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) as a Bank Examiner, a job I retained for thirty years. For ten years, I taught new examiners at the FDIC training center in Arlington, VA. Because of that teaching experience, I was chosen for assignments to the Bahrain Monetary Agency in the Middle East, and the Reserve Bank in Harare, Zimbabwe, in Southern Africa.

The best thing that ever happened to me was meeting my wife, Mary Garity, in 1989. Although her body has been weakened by Multiple Sclerosis (MS), she is a very strong person in every other way. We are retired and try to concentrate on the important things in life: sharing and appreciating every day.

My Marine experience accounted for only three years, but many memories and positive rewards resulted. Most importantly, I made life-long friendships with four other Marines. My military experience gave me a life-long thirst for travel. The GI Bill helped me further my education and I believe being a Marine Officer was a factor in joining the FDIC. I'm very proud to have served.

Every Tuesday I deliver food boxes to homebound veterans in Milwaukee. It is a program of veterans helping veterans. I look forward to seeing these veterans each week and sharing a story and hopefully, a smile.

Thank you, 1st Lieutenant James A. LaCharite, for what you gave for us.

**ATTENTION:** The Veterans Memorial dedication will be May 25 at 2 PM following the VFW Auxiliary chicken dinner from 11 AM to 1 PM.